



A223 Assessment guide

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Introduction

Welcome to the A223 assessment guide. These pages explain the assessment policy for A223 and provide guidance on preparing and writing your assignments. The assignments themselves (TMAs 01–06) can be found in the ‘Assessment’ section of the A223 website and on the study planner.

You should read this guide in conjunction with the Assessment information for Arts modules, which provides general advice about assessment and contains important information on how to prepare and submit your assignments.

1. Assessment of A223

The assessment for this module consists of:

- six tutor-marked assignments (TMAs)
- a three-hour examination which you will sit at the end of the module.

Your result will be determined from the weighted average of the scores that you receive for your TMAs and final examination. For more information on how your result is determined, please see the [Assessment Handbook](#).

Structure of the assignments and the exam

The assignments in A223 build on your level 1 study and help prepare you for studying at level 3. They are designed to test your understanding of the module materials and to develop your skills.

The TMAs have different weightings. The first TMA has a lighter weighting, as we know that some students struggle with the first TMA of a new module. TMA 05 is a longer TMA, so it carries a higher weighing.

TMA 01	5%
TMA 02	8.5%
TMA 03	8.5%
TMA 04	8.5%
TMA 05	11%
TMA 06	8.5%

The TMAs offer a range of graded tasks, starting with a short document analysis and working up to the long task in TMA 05. The final TMA is shorter to give you time to devote to preparation for the examination. TMAs 03 and 04 have additional tasks – writing a summary and preparing a presentation. These are useful skills in themselves, and they require you think about the structure and main points of your work, so will help to improve your overall writing skills.

Your tutor will mark your assignments, but, perhaps more importantly, will also give you feedback on how you can improve your work. **Always look at the feedback on your previous assignments when starting work on the next TMA.**

The examination is arranged in three parts and takes three hours. You must answer one question from each of the three parts. Part 1 of the exam tests your ability to analyse a source. Part 2 tests your ability write an essay in response to a question. Part 3 asks you to answer a question about one of the module themes. You can find more information about the structure of the exam in the A223 Specimen Exam Paper and Revision Guide. Additionally, an Advance Notification document giving further guidance on the content of the exam will be released towards the end of the module.

Can I skip any of the six assignments?

It is always better to submit poor or incomplete work than no work at all, since you will automatically receive a zero grade for any assignments you fail to submit. That will severely impact on your chances of passing the module, or of passing it at the grade you may have been hoping for.

2. Understanding your mark

The following criteria are given as guidance to tutors for assigning grades to written work.

Work in Band A (85–100%) would display most or all of the following:

- Excellent understanding of the subject and period under consideration, and of the methods of enquiry appropriate to their study.
- Excellent ability to examine critically and use both primary and secondary sources.
- Very well-structured and coherent argument, clearly focused on the question.

Work in Band B (70–84%) work would display most or all of the following:

- Good understanding of the subject and period under consideration, and of the methods of enquiry appropriate to their study.
- Good ability to examine critically and use both primary and secondary sources.
- Well-structured and coherent argument, clearly focused on the question.

Work in Band C (55–69%) work would display most or all of the following:

- Sound understanding of the subject and period under consideration, and of the methods of enquiry appropriate to their study.
- Sound ability to examine critically and use both primary and secondary sources.
- Reasonably clear and coherent argument, largely focused on the question.

Work in Band D (40–54%) work would display most or all of the following:

- Some understanding of the subject and period under consideration, and of the methods of enquiry appropriate to their study.
- Some ability to examine critically and use both primary and secondary sources.
- Some signs of a structured argument and of focus on the question.

Work in Bands E–G (below 40%) work would display most or all of the following:

- Little understanding (or actual misunderstanding) of the subject and period under consideration, and of the methods of enquiry appropriate to their study.
- Little ability to examine critically and use both primary and secondary sources.
- Little sign of a structured argument or of focus on the question.
- A *bare fail* answer (30–39) should contain the bare bones that could be improved to attain a pass.

These are the criteria for marking the presentation task (TMA 04, Part 2):

- For a *Pass 1* (85%–100%) the presentation will give a good overview of the essay; it will show good judgement about which points to include, and will be clearly expressed and well structured. In addition, it should demonstrate clear signposting or imaginative choice of structure – especially where this clearly differentiates the presentation from the essay on which it is based.
- A *Pass 2* (70%–84%) presentation will be an accurate presentation of some part of the essay; it will show good judgement about which points to include, and will be clearly expressed and well structured.
- A *Pass 3* (55%–69%) presentation will be a fairly accurate presentation of some part of the essay, and will be fairly clear and well structured. It should be coherent, even if there are some jumps or gaps.
- A *Pass 4* (40%–54%) presentation will include some accurate presentation of some part of the essay, though it may not be altogether clear or coherent. (The minimum for a pass is some recognisable attempt to summarise a particular part of the essay.)
- A *Bare Fail* (30%–39%) will be awarded to a presentation that contains material that relates to some, perhaps unconnected, parts of the essay, but which is very unclear, disorganised or confusing.
- A *Fail or Bad Fail* (0%–29%) presentation is one that contains very little or no material that relates to the student's essay, or which is so unclear or disorganised that it is impossible to tell whether it does so or not.

3. Preparing to write your assignment

The information in this section applies to all your TMAs and you should ensure that you have read it before you commence work on TMA 01. The assignments on A223 consist of a variety of tasks – writing essays of varying length, including some that focus on specific primary sources, writing short summaries and preparing a presentation. In the examination, you will be asked to write essays, some of them analysing documents or images under timed conditions.

You can find further help with study and assessment on the [Skills for OU Study](#) website. (You can also access this through StudentHome.)

Reading the instructions and the guidance notes

For each TMA, you are given a particular 'rubric' or set of instructions. This comes before the question and specifies the word length and cut-off date, and tells you what you must do. You should follow the rubric scrupulously – failure to do so is likely to cost you marks.

Guidance notes come after the question. These notes are your starting point when planning your answer. Guidance notes explain the purpose of the TMA and include advice that will help you to answer the question.

Understanding the question

Before you start work on your history essay, you need to make sure that you fully understand the question.

- 1 Identify the subject. What part of the module does the question relate to? What issues, themes or debates does it ask you to consider?
- 2 Identify the task. Think about the question and what exactly you are being asked to do. Different questions require different responses. If a question asks 'why did such an event happen?', you would answer 'it happened because...'. If the question asks you to 'compare and contrast' two texts, your answer should systematically show the points at which the two texts are similar, and those at which they differ.

Here is a short reference guide to help you get to grips with the terms used, and their accompanying expectations.

- **Analyse:** determine the meaning of an account or argument by breaking it down into constituent parts and evaluating each aspect.
- **Assess:** evaluate an issue, argument or account according to a set of criteria and come to a judgement about its nature, value or significance.
- **Compare:** look for similarities and differences, and come to a judgement about their significance.
- **Contrast:** set in opposition to bring out differences.
- **Discuss:** explore a topic, proposition, argument or text from all angles, demonstrating that you fully understand all its implications.
- **Evaluate:** consider the value of a document, an artefact or a debate for the investigation of a particular question.
- **Examine:** look closely at a topic, proposition or text, exploring its significance and implications.
- **Explain:** make plain; interpret and account for; give reasons for.
- **To what extent:** set down the arguments in favour of a proposition, and the arguments against it, to reach a final verdict on the degree to which it is true.

Analysing documents and visual images

Several of the TMAs ask questions based on documents or visual images. The key component of your answer will be an analysis of the source.

Documents

If it is a document, you should think about:

- What kind of document is it?
 - Who wrote it?
 - Who were the intended audience?
 - Why was it written?
 - When was it written?
 - What type of document is it (public, private, official, published, etc.)?
- what is its historical context? In what circumstances was it written? Who is likely to have read it? How was it received?
- what comments can you make on specific points in the text? What information does it provide?
- what comments can you make about the way it is written and the kind of language used?
- what is its significance for the study of the period?

You will not be asked to paraphrase the document, though you will be expected to show that you understand its content. You will be asked to focus on specific issues in the extract and on how these relate to broader historical points. You will also need to locate evidence from the document text to support your argument.

Images

In the case of images, you will need to think about a similar set of questions. The caption will give you some information.

- Especially in the case of paintings you should note its size (e.g. is this a life-size portrait or a miniature?).
- In what medium is the image (paint, print, photograph) and how does this affect what information is conveyed?
- Who created it and how was it produced?
- For what purpose was it produced?
- For what audience was it intended?
- What is its significance for the study of the period?

When you have thought about these questions (and you may not have answers to them all), move on to the questions you have been asked in the assignment. As with text documents, the question will not ask you simply to describe an image, but will ask about its wider context.

Further advice on how to analyse images is provided in online exercises in weeks 7, 8 and 18.

Visually impaired students

Should you be unable to work on the visual texts because of sight impairment, an alternative assignment can be set. As the preparation and delivery of alternative assignments takes some time, please give as much notice as possible – preferably at

least four weeks. As soon as you know who your tutor is, please contact him or her for the relevant alternative assignments.

Preparing to answer the question

In order to answer each TMA question, you will need to do some research by reading a range of primary and secondary sources which will give you the knowledge and evidence you need to answer the question. Begin by going back over your notes from the relevant sections of the module materials and any additional reading you have already done. Identify further reading you need to do in order to deepen your understanding of the issues and debates and to provide evidence for your answer. As you read, you will find other questions arise. Make a note of these as you go along, as they will help you to organise your thoughts as you prepare to write.

You cannot read everything that has been written about your topic, but you will be expected to read a large enough selection to enable you marshal evidence to create an argument. At level 2, you will find that the module materials, together with readings recommended by the module team or your tutor, will provide much of what you need to answer the question.

Planning

Before you start writing your essay, make a plan. A clear plan setting out the main points of your argument will help you to write a well-structured essay. Try to identify three or four points of argument that will help you to answer the question and devote one or two paragraphs to each. Be prepared to make adjustments – for example, it may be necessary to break down more complex points into more than one paragraph, each one having its own emphasis. At the planning stage, try to identify the pieces of evidence that will support your points. Sort your points into groups, so that they can be presented in a structured way, giving the essay a beginning, middle and end.

Evidence and argument

Your essay needs to develop a balanced argument. It needs to avoid assertion and speculation, statements of belief or guesswork that are not supported by evidence. You can do this by showing that you are aware of different perspectives alongside your own and by using evidence to demonstrate and substantiate your points. When finding evidence for your argument you will need to select material from the sources you have encountered. You need to find sources that are relevant to the question and which provide the most convincing example of the point you want to make. Use your evidence clearly and appropriately to consider precise issues and problems relating to the question. Your evidence will be derived from primary sources and/or secondary sources. Some tips for using both types of source to support your argument are provided here.

Primary sources

When referring to primary sources, you need to show some awareness of their nature, origin, purpose and significance. You will need to use the skills in source analysis that you

have acquired to assess the reliability of your source and whether it is representative of a broader body of opinion. All primary sources demonstrate the concerns and interests of the people who produced them. An unusual or particularly biased source is still useful as long as you show awareness of its purpose and meaning in the debates you are exploring.

Secondary sources

When using secondary sources you will need to be aware of the description of events or people, but also of any debates between historians on a topic you are covering. When discussing historians' arguments, try to put the ideas you want to express into your own words as much as possible. This will help you to learn the material on a deeper level. Sometimes a historian will express an argument in a way that is difficult to paraphrase, and you might want use their words in your essay – but keep these to a minimum, and make sure any quotations are as short as possible and are referenced.

4. Writing your essay

Once you have your plan, you are ready to start writing your essay. The essay should follow your plan – but be flexible. Sometimes your plan does not work when it comes to writing. If this is the case, go back and revise the plan. Your essay should be written as continuous prose, divided into paragraphs. Use paragraphs to structure your prose; for example, start a new paragraph to signal to your reader the moment at which you are moving on to a fresh point. Check also that each point is supported by an appropriate amount or type of evidence. Keep a thread of meaning running through your essay. Each paragraph, and indeed each sentence, should follow through from the previous one, with adequate signposting to help the reader follow the direction of your thoughts.

As well as developing your argument in the body of the text, you need to give your essay an introductory and a concluding paragraph. The best opening is one that addresses the question directly, perhaps by exploring key or problematic terms. Your introduction should state how you think the question should be interpreted and how you intend to tackle it.

Finally, write a conclusion in which you stand back from the details of your argument in order to sum up your general response to the question. Your conclusion should be appropriate to the question and justified by the argument presented in the rest of your essay.

Word limit

A word limit is indicated for each TMA. The word limit includes embedded quotations, in-text references, tables and appendices, but excludes the references. Make sure you include a total word count at the end of each of your assignments. For multiple-part assignments include a sub-total at the end of each part. Writing to a stipulated length is an important skill, and you should aim to comply with the stated word limits for your assignments. It is good practice to be able to make your points concisely, and you will not lose marks simply because your answer is a little shorter than the maximum length. However, if your response is significantly shorter (for example, if you only write 75 per

cent of the possible total) you are unlikely to have fulfilled the objectives of the assignment required to obtain a very good grade.

At the same time, you must not exceed the word limit by more than 10 per cent. The task set by an assignment is to answer the question in a certain number of words, so if you have exceeded the word limit you have not carried out the task that you have been set. If you do exceed the word limit by more than 10 per cent, a penalty will be imposed. The Assessment information for Arts modules provides specific information about the penalties that are imposed for assignments that are over length.

Layout

When preparing your assignment for submission, please ensure that you number each page and leave wide margins so that your tutor has space to add comments. Assignments should be double-spaced, using a font size of at least 12 points. Also, put your name and student number in the header of the document. Always write the exact question at the start of the assignment. This helps to concentrate the mind and is useful when you come to revise. Where there is a choice of questions for the TMA, it also informs the tutor of the topic you have chosen to focus on. There is no need, however, to reproduce passages of text or guidance notes.

Academic conventions

Write as clearly as possible. Keep your language straightforward and your sentences short and to the point. Avoid unnecessarily long and complicated words, and sweeping, unsupported statements and repetition. When you are writing a formal essay, you should not write in a casual or colloquial style. Do not include contractions in formal written English (don't, couldn't, isn't, etc.). An essay presents a reasoned argument based on evidence. It is not a statement of your personal opinions or beliefs. Nor should it assume that your reader shares your views. Avoid expressions such as 'In my opinion...', 'I believe...' or 'we think...'. Instead you need to use academic English which is more formal and impersonal. For further advice see [Skills for OU study](#).

Check your spelling and try to ensure that your grammar and syntax are correct. Keep a dictionary to hand if you know that your spelling is weak, or use the spellchecker of your word processor (set your word processor's default language to UK English and remember that spellcheckers are not foolproof – you will need to read over your essay checking for typographical errors). Check proper names in the module material and make sure that you spell any foreign words correctly. Odd slips in spelling and punctuation will not cost you marks, but tutors will rightly penalise assignments in which the spelling, grammar and scholarly presentation impair its coherence or its clarity.

Quotations

In general, long quotations should be avoided. If your assignment consists of long chunks taken verbatim from the module material or other sources (even if acknowledged) with little connecting material written by you, then you will not achieve high marks. If you simply slot in chunks of other people's thoughts, your argument will not be as closely focused on the topic assigned as it should be. This is because the authors you are quoting are not

writing on precisely the same topic as you. Finally, reading lots of quotations strung together can be difficult for the reader (your tutor), since the writing style and tone will vary, and be different from your own. For all these reasons, try to avoid lengthy and too-frequent quotations.

You should use single quotation marks for short quotes (' '). These should be embedded within a sentence so that the whole sentence is grammatically correct. If you do use a longer quote to illustrate a point and it is longer than three lines, it should be indented. That means it should be set in further from the margin, and the quotation marks omitted. (You can find examples of quotations in the module books.) Remember that every quotation must have a reference, which should appear at the end of the sentence with the quotation in it.

For further guidance on using quotes see [Skills for OU study](#).

Parroting and plagiarism

By parroting we mean the uncritical repetition of something you have read elsewhere, either in the module materials or in another source. Parroting is often a sign that you have not understood the material. Rather than repeating what you have read, you should try to fit relevant ideas together into an argument.

Sometimes when students do this they also forget to acknowledge their sources. They do not realise themselves that they are quoting, or paraphrasing, so they do not give references. Technically, this constitutes plagiarism. Plagiarism means reproducing in your answer, word for word or in very close paraphrase, work other than your own without acknowledging it. Tutors realise that students sometimes stray into plagiarism without meaning to, often from inexperience. Even unintentional plagiarism, however, can lower your marks. This is another reason to try to put your ideas into your own words, no matter how difficult it may seem.

See the section on plagiarism in the Assessment information for Arts modules.

Referencing

Referencing your work is an important part of degree-level study. It allows readers (in this case, your tutor) to find the material you have used in your assignment.

All your assignments must include in-text references in the form (Brown, 1999, p. 25). The full reference for everything that you have cited in your assignment should then appear in a References section – an alphabetical list of references – at the end of your assignment. This is known as the Harvard style of referencing.

This [Library Information Literacy](#) website has a good outline of how to reference. Although it is based on an older module and has some types of material that don't appear in A223, working through the activities will help to develop your referencing skills.

A complete guide to this method of referencing is contained in the [OU Harvard guide to citing references](#). The guide contains much more information on a wider range of materials.

The tables in the following sections give examples of references from the A223 materials that you are likely to use in your assignments.

Referencing your module materials

	In-text reference	Full reference for references
Reference to or quotation from a book chapter	(Younger, 2016, p. 271)	Younger, N. (2016) 'Chapter 7: The European elite: nobility and gentry', in Grell, O. P. and Brunton, D. (eds) <i>Individuals, Lives and Livings</i> , Milton Keynes, The Open University, pp. 261–303.
Reference to an online reading	(Barker, 1605)	Barker, Dr (1605) 'Dr Barker's notes on Mrs Coderington, 20 January 1605' in A223, Online session 4.2, exercise 3 [Online]. Available at https://learn2.open.ac.uk/mod/oucontent/view.php?id=833770&section=1.3 (Accessed 30 March 2016).
Reference to other online module materials (see also 'Multiple references from same author in the same year' below)	(The Open University, 2016)	The Open University (2016) 'The midwife', A223 <i>Online session 4.2: Approaches to greensickness</i> [Online]. Available at https://learn2.open.ac.uk/mod/oucontent/view.php?id=922813&section=1.2 (Accessed 15 November 2016).
Reference to a printed reading	(Defoe, 1709)	Defoe, D. (1709) 'The Review, 25 June 1709' in Grell, O. P. and Brunton, D. (eds) (2016) <i>Individuals, Lives and Livings</i> , Milton Keynes, The Open University, p. 47.
Reference to material quoted in a chapter	(Kroman (1965) cited in Grell, 2016, p. 62)	Grell, O. P. (2016) 'Chapter 2: Popular Christianity and personal faith', in Grell, O. P. and Brunton, D. (eds) <i>Individuals, Lives and Livings</i> , Milton Keynes, The Open University, pp. 51–95.
Reference to an image	(van Tilborgh, c.1665)	van Tilborgh, G. (c.1665) <i>A Noble Family Dining</i> , oil on canvas, Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, Hungary, in Grell, O. P. and Brunton, D. (eds) <i>Individuals, Lives and Livings</i> , Milton Keynes, The Open University, p. 24.
Reference to the set book (which is an edited collection)	(Hindle, 2014, p. 49)	Hindle, S. (2014), 'Rural society', in Kümin, B. (ed.) <i>The European World, 1500–1800</i> , London, Routledge, pp. 48–57.

Multiple references from the same author in the same year

If you have more than one reference from an author in the same year, i.e. for references to online module materials, then you should follow the rule below:

In-text reference	Full reference
(The Open University, 2016a)	The Open University (2016a) 'The learned physician', <i>A223 Online session 4.2: Approaches to greensickness</i> [Online]. Available at https://learn2.open.ac.uk/mod/oucontent/view.php?id=922812&section=1.1 (Accessed 15 November 2016).
(The Open University, 2016b)	The Open University (2016b) 'The midwife', <i>A223 Online session 4.2: Approaches to greensickness</i> [Online]. Available at https://learn2.open.ac.uk/mod/oucontent/view.php?id=922813&section=1.2 (Accessed 15 November 2016).
(The Open University, 2016c)	The Open University (2016c) 'The case history', <i>A223 Online session 4.2: Approaches to greensickness</i> [Online]. Available at https://learn2.open.ac.uk/mod/oucontent/view.php?id=922813&section=1.3 (Accessed 15 November 2016).

How to reference other materials

Reference to or quotation from a printed book	(Kamen, 2000, p. 123)	Kamen, H. (2000) <i>Early Modern European Society</i> , London, Routledge.
Reference to a print journal article	(Findlay, 1998, p. 558)	Findlay, R. (1998) 'The refashioning of Martin Guerre', <i>The American Historical Review</i> , vol. 93, pp. 553-71.
Reference to an electronic journal article	(Findlay, 1998, p. 558)	Findlay, R. (1998) 'The refashioning of Martin Guerre', <i>The American Historical Review</i> , vol. 93, pp. 553-71 [Online]. Available at JSTOR.
Reference to chapter in an edited collection	(Crowston, 2008, p. 30)	Crowston, C. (2008) 'Women, gender and guilds in early modern Europe: an overview of recent research', in Lucassen, J., De Moor, T. and van Zanden, J. L. (eds) <i>The Return of the Guilds</i> , Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, pp. 19-44.
Quotation from another source within a book or article	(Wunder, 1980, cited in Friedrichs, 1995, p. 135)	Friedrichs, C. (1995) <i>The Early Modern City, 1450-1750</i> , London, Longman.
Reference to an ebook	(Wiesner-Hanks and Chojnacka, 2014, p. 50)	Wiesner-Hanks, M. and Chojnacka, M. (2014) <i>Ages of Woman, Ages of Man: Sources in European Social History, 1400-1750</i> [Online], Abingdon, Routledge. Available at Taylor and Francis (Accessed 26 March 2016).

Proofreading and redrafting

Allow yourself some time before the TMA cut-off date to read over your work. Ideally, put it aside for a day or so, before reading it again with a fresh eye. This will help you to spot any obvious errors in spelling or punctuation. More importantly, it will give you the opportunity to check that the essay answers the question, that you have chosen the best evidence to support your answer and presented it in the most convincing way, and that you haven't forgotten to include any important points. You may need to redraft your essay to ensure that your argument is clear, effective and well supported with evidence.

Checklist

- 1 Format: have I put the question at the top of the assignment, along with my name and student identification number in the header? Have I numbered the pages?
- 2 Length: have I put the word count at the end of the assignment? Have I double-checked that my word count is within the limit stipulated in the instructions for the TMA?
- 3 Introduction and conclusion: have I written both an introduction and a conclusion to my essay? Does each do what it is meant to do – that is, respectively, to introduce my argument and to summarise my findings?
- 4 References: have I referenced the work of others and the source material which I have found? Have I used the correct format (Harvard) for the references?
- 5 Typos: have I given my assignment one last read through for any silly errors, to find any awkward syntax, and to check the flow of my argument?

Instructions on how to submit your TMA are given in the Assessment information for Arts modules.

5. Specific TMA guidance

Writing a summary

As part of TMA 03 you are asked to write a summary of your essay. This is a really useful skill, very similar to the skills required for note taking – you need to identify important points and put them into your own words. Many (though not all) journal articles begin with a short abstract, which gives a useful overview of the content.

Here is an abstract from a journal article (you can read the whole journal article 'Lieutenant-Colonel John Rede: West Country Leveller and Baptist pioneer' [via the OU Library](#)). At 126 words the abstract is slightly longer than your summary, but provides a useful model.

This study of the life of Leveller ally John Rede, Governor of Poole, seeks to illuminate the crucial relationship between a group of West Country Presbyterians, Independents, political and religious radicals, and Leveller allies

during the critical years of the English Revolution, 1647–1651. In the course of this discussion it aims to shed some light on one of the longest-standing debates about the Levellers: the degree to which they formed an effective and coherent political movement. It concludes with an assessment of the balance of forces between the Levellers and radical Independents and their opponents. It then goes on to trace one line of religious and political descent from those events through John Rede's work in establishing the particular Baptist church of Porton in Wiltshire.

Rees, J. (2015) 'Lieutenant-Colonel John Rede: West Country Leveller and Baptist pioneer,' *The Seventeenth Century*, vol. 30, p. 317.

To write a summary, begin by reviewing your essay and identifying the main points – these should follow the paragraph structure. Then you need to turn these into sentences, and string them together to make a coherent prose passage. Don't be tempted to simply copy sentences from your assignment – they were written for a different purpose and are set into longer passages of prose, so they are unlikely to make a good summary. Finally, add an introductory sentence. It may help to imagine you are explaining your essay to someone who knows nothing about the subject. You don't need to provide references in a summary.

Preparing a presentation

For TMA 04, Part 2, you are required to produce a short presentation, based on the essay you will write for Part 1 of the assignment. This task builds on the skills you have developed through note taking (when you have to identify important points in your reading) and writing a summary for TMA 03. Practising these skills will not only allow you to create a good presentation; it can also feed back into your essay writing – helping you to understand better how to structure your essays and how to explain complex points clearly.

As with writing a summary for your presentation you need to begin by identifying the main points of your essay. Then you need to rewrite them in a style that is suitable for presentation. If you choose to produce a slide-style presentation, then they need to be in the form of headings, bullet points and notes which flesh out the heading. If you choose to submit an oral presentation, then your points will form the basis for a script, which you will record using the Audio Recording Tool (ART).

When grading the presentation, your tutor is asked to consider the clarity and structure of your presentation and your choice of points to include, given the content of your essay overall. If you are submitting your presentation in audio format, your tutor is not asked to grade your performance as a speaker – just the content of your presentation. Fuller marking criteria for the presentation task are provided in Section 2 of this guide.

There is an online exercise on presentations in Week 18 (Preparing for TMA 04) to help you with this assignment which includes an opportunity to try creating presentations in these formats.

If you have a disability that prevents you from using the ART, you will still be able to choose between two formats – a slide presentation or the text for a blog post or short article. Please contact your tutor, who will be able to advise you.

Technical advice about your audio presentation

If you choose to produce an oral presentation, you will need a computer with a built-in microphone or a headset with a microphone. If you don't already have a headset, you will find that they are readily available and inexpensive to buy. If you plan to submit an oral presentation for TMA 04, you should check whether you have an appropriate headset that works with your computer well before the cut-off date.

In order to make the audio recording, you will need to use the ART in the 'Assessment' section of the module website. The tool is designed to be simple to use. It automatically produces WAV files in a specially compressed form suitable for submitting to the eTMA system. You can find advice on how to use the ART in the [OU Computing Guide](#).

When you have finished your recording, it will appear as a WAV file in a specified location on your computer. You can drag this file into the folder in which the rest of your work for this assignment is stored – this will make it easier for you to zip files together.

The online activity is an ideal opportunity to check that you have a suitable headset and to practise working with the tool.

Technical advice about your slide-style presentation

If you choose to produce a slide-style presentation, you can do this using your normal word processing package. If you do this, you should save your document with a .docx, .doc or .rtf extension, as usual.

If you prefer, however, you can use specialised presentation software, such as Microsoft PowerPoint or OpenOffice Impress. Whichever software you use, please make sure that you save your presentation with a .ppt extension. Please **do not** save your file with other extensions, such as .pptx or .odp.

Again, the online activity is an ideal opportunity to check that you are able to save your slides in the right format.

FAQs

Why does this part of TMA 04 attract relatively few marks?

We think that this is an important part of the assessment on A223 – one that tests important skills in analysing and summarising an argument. Nevertheless, since you may not have encountered this kind of assessment on a module before, we want it to be a 'low stakes' activity, which will not have too much influence on your final result.

Can I share my practice presentation with other students on the module?

Please do **not** do this. However, you are encouraged to talk to other students about this task – about what you found easy or hard, for example, or what you might do differently next time around.

What kind of software can I use to submit a slide presentation?

You can use specialised presentation software, such as Microsoft PowerPoint or OpenOffice Impress, or an ordinary word-processing package. Refer to the section 'Technical advice about your slide-style presentation'.

I'm having technical problems with the Audio Recording Tool. Who should I ask for help?

Your tutor will not be able to provide technical assistance. You should refer to the instructions about using the tool in the [Computing Guide](#). If you are still having problems, contact the [Computing Helpdesk](#).

6. Submitting your assignment via the eTMA system

When submitting your assignments via the eTMA (electronic tutor-marked assignment) system, you can only submit one file. For TMA 04 which has two parts, you must zip these together. If you try to submit more than one file without zipping, the second submission will overwrite the first one.

To create a zip file, you can use any compression software that produces a file with a .zip extension. In Windows, you will need to select the files you want to zip together and then go to File > Send to > Compressed (zipped) folder. This will produce a single file that you can upload to the eTMA system. For more help on this, you can look at [‘Combining and compressing \(zipping\) your files’](#) in the Help Centre on StudentHome.

If you choose to produce an audio presentation for TMA 04, see ‘Technical advice about your audio presentation’ for additional guidance on submitting your audio file.

You can find help with the processes you need to follow, including the formats the eTMA system will accept in Assessment information for Arts modules and the [Assessment Handbook for Undergraduate Modules](#). If, after reading the advice in the Handbook, you still have problems with using the eTMA system, go first to the Help Centre on StudentHome (go to StudentHome, click on ‘Help centre’, then choose ‘Computing help’ and ‘Submitting and collecting assignments’).

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